

REACTION TO THE FRENCH COLONIZATION OF INDO-CHINA

contented themselves with citing abuses for the French to reform, but they did not yet think of taking matters into their own hands by demanding political rights. This was essentially the attitude that dominated the pre-War period. Learning, not revolution, was the byword of the great majority before 1914.

The first reaction in Indo-China to the War was surprise at Europe's suicide, and panic on the part of all the population. Crops were sold at any price just to get rid of bank-notes. This painful impression was increased by the first War news, but the clamping down of censorship and word of the Marne victory reassured the public. Annamite tradition believes that success is the mark of Heaven's approval, so that the ultimate victory strengthened French prestige by religious sanction. Japan's entry into the War on the Allied side was not only comforting but it removed any hope of enlisting Japanese support of an Annamite uprising.

That Sarraut's liberal policy antedated the War was an important factor in keeping the country quiet. More important was the stimulus given by the War to the colony's economy. The piastre rose steadily, and with it the standard of living. Ties with France were loosened psychologically and economically, and Indo-China began to acquire a place all her own in the Far East. Not that the country was entirely quiet, but what incidents occurred were of a local rather than a general character.

The attempted escape of the Emperor Duy Than, the uprising of Quang Nghi, and the attack on the prison of Saigon, were the most dramatic occurrences. A few military columns manoeuvred in Upper Tonkin, where the unrest was happily attributed to

German propaganda in nearby Yunnan and Siam. The most discreditable incident took place in 1917, when the militia of Thai Nguyen revolted, attacked the garrison, and devastated the province. The population, exasperated by the criminal behaviour of the Resident, Darles, resisted for two months. The subsequent investigation revealed terrible conditions in his charnel house of a penitentiary, and his sanction of torture of the prisoners who had offended him. Despite the Court of Saigon's recognition of his guilt he was fined just 200 francs and given a lucrative position by the reactionary colonials led by Governor Cognacq, after his withdrawal from the administration.

The War Department in 1915 tried for the first time importing forty-four trained Annamite workers to France to serve in the Aviation School at Marseille. The experiment proved so successful that through-